

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

COLONIAL NEW-YORK.
DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF THE EARLY COLONIAL SETTLEMENTS, principally on Long Island, with a Map of the Western Part made in 1666. Translated, compiled and Edited from Original Records in the Office of the Secretary of State and the State Library, by R. F. FENNO, Keeper of the Historical Records. 4to. pp. xxxiii, 880. (Albany: Weed, Parsons & Co.)

If we begin by saying that this latest addition to the valuable series of published "Documents relating to the Colonial History of the State of New-York" is a remarkably entertaining volume, we trust that we shall not be suspected of underrating its real importance. It embraces a great deal of serious antiquarian lore, and many papers relating to the boundary disputes between the Dutch colony and its Yankee neighbors, the incursions of the English on Long Island in the hands of Dutch rule and the policy of the correspondence of Peter Stuyvesant, but in addition to these matters there are so many quaint particulars of the domestic administration of the colony that the most careless trifler with history might find pleasure in the broad pages.

Often, as we turn them, we can fancy that we are rummaging in the library of Dierck Knickerbocker. That worthy certainly would have been delighted with the instructions of Governor Kieft and his council to Secretary Dierck to go with twenty-five soldiers to Schout's Bay on Long Island and surprise certain Yankee "interlopers or vagabonds" who had taken down the arms of their High Mightinesses the States General, and carved a fool's head in their place—all which appeared strange to us, being a case of *crimen lasa majestatis*, and tending to the great disparagement of the spirit of Knickerbocker sovereignty. Quite in the same complaint of neglect of duty lodged by the Governor and his Council against Cornelius van der Hoyken, fiscal and schout of New-Netherland, from which it appears that the delinquencies of our modern police officials and District Attorneys have two hundred and forty years of precedent. "Many complaints," so runs this document, "are daily heard of thefts, robberies, killing of hogs and goats, and other excesses, and they are increasing every day more and more; yet, will from all appearance shortly culminate in more plundering and highway robbery, and it is moreover to be feared that people will murder one another, and all this because no delinquents are arrested, prosecuted, or punished."

There is a further charge against the Fiscal, that he has "atrociously defamed" Governor Kieft as a rascal and a thief; but this paragraph was cancelled. The Governor seems to have fairly earned his sobriquet of "William the Testy." In 1646 we find him insisting proceedings against the minister, Everard Bogardus, a reverend gentleman who was long remembered in the colony for his cordiality, his temper and his thirst. Dominie Bogardus had quarrelled with Kieft's predecessor, Wouter van Twiller, and berated him "as a child of the Devil, an incarnate villain, whose back-grooves were better than he," and had promised to "pitch into him from the pulpit."

"You have indulged no less in scattering abuse during our administration," Kieft declares. "Scarcely a person in the entire land have you spared; not even your own wife, or her sister, particularly when you were in good company and jovially. The catalogue of the Dominie's specific misdeeds is long, and lavishly fit for citation in full: 'When minister Dierck administered the Lord's Supper in the morning, you came drunk into the pulpit in the afternoon; also on the Friday before Christmas of the same year, when you preached the sermon calling to repentance.' In the beginning of the year 1645, being at supper at the Fiscal's, where you arrived drunk, you commenced, as is your custom, to scold your Deacons and the Secretary."

"On the 21st of March, 1645, being at a wedding-feast at Adam Brouwer's, and pretty drunk, you commenced scolding the Fiscal and Secretary then present, censuring also the Director not a little." Bogardus refused to answer the charges, but he was not so easily satisfied. "You are a subterfuge, calumny, insult and defamation of God's holy word," a declaration which the magistrates agreed to have met by issuing fresh citations at intervals for about six months. Finally Bogardus, Kieft, and the delinquent Fiscal, Van der Hoyken, all sailed for Holland in the same ship, and were drowned at sea.

Director Peter Stuyvesant did not bring peace to New-Netherland, and among the many complaints which the home authorities made of his conduct is the following: "We are surprised that you amuse yourself with protests and counter-protests against the municipal officers concerning matters of so little importance as, for instance, the pews and seats in the church, and as we trust that the church is large enough to place every one according to his rank, it appears to us that such trifles do not deserve so much attention, especially in those troublesome times." Church matters were almost a standing cause of trouble. The village of Flatbush (Brooklyn) petitioned in 1656 that Dominie Polhemus should be allowed to officiate alternately in Midwout (Flatbush) and Brooklyn, "which he appears willing to do," and Governor Stuyvesant and his Council decided by vote that they "had no objection against Dominie Polhemus officiating alternately at both places," but they added, with a charming touch of caution, "wind and weather permitting." In less than a year, however, the Brooklyn people tired of Dominie Polhemus, and asked to be excused from paying their share of his salary, on the plea that his ministrations were not worth the price.

"During the week of the 10th of Sunday afternoon, gives us only a prayer instead of a sermon, from which we learn and understand little, and when we think that the prayer or sermon, or whatever it be called, is beginning, it is already over, so that he gives little edification to the congregation." Even during the Christmas holidays the only edification they had was a prayer so short that it was over before we had collected our thoughts. They were held to their duty, however, and later we find that certain villagers who refused to pay were fined double the amount of their assessment.

The Dutch West India Company practiced a tolerance in religious matters which was not common in those days, their object being, as they explained in a letter to Stuyvesant, to do all possible inducements to colonists; but this tolerance was not in making the Governor conform to their policy. They refused a request from him that "the new territories should not be further invaded by people of Jewish race"; and they roundly rebuked him for presuming to forbid the Jews trading to Fort Orange and purchasing real estate. On the other hand, they were unwilling that the Jews should have a synagogue, or be employed in any public service; or above all that they should open retail shops; so that possibly the invasion was effectively impeded. The Governor sent Lutherans to prison for refusing to be converted to the Reformed Church; but the Company, though they rejected a petition from these people "for a preacher and house of their religion," discovered Stuyvesant's excessive zeal, and instructed him to let them worship as they pleased in their own houses. It was "the abominable sect called Quakers," however, which chiefly stirred Governor Peter's wrath. In 1657 the villagers of Flatbush held a public meeting and thirty-one of them signed a remonstrance to the Governor against a recent ordinance forbidding them to receive or entertain Quakers. "It was a noble statement of the Christian 'law of love, peace and liberty,'" and the signers boldly declared that they could not in conscience obey the command of the authorities; but it must be confessed that most of the leaders, being arrested and brought before the Council, showed little of the spirit of martyrdom, acknowledging their offence, craving pardon, and promising better behavior for the future. Several of them were fined and imprisoned. One of the culprits, Henry Townsend, remained defiant, and in 1661 a complaint was made that the Quakers were holding convocations at his house. The Governor ordered the Under Schout to inquire into the case and send the following letter, in English, to the villagers:

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that if the quakers and other Sects contra to Order & Law private Convencicles had been left, We have sent our Minister, Mr. John Tilton, to the Quakers, to the effect that if they will give unto them, an Exact account & true Information of the names of all the persons who have been kept, and with persons therein had Excessed, with persons—men, or woman, there had been present & at the said meetings, we will be content to let them have their Meetings, as they shall desire, on all Circumstances belonging to it. So after my Love I shall Rest.

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The brilliancy of your spirit, but allow every one to have his own belief, as long as he behaves quietly and legally, gives no offence to his neighbors, does not oppose the government. As the government of this city has always practised this maxim of moderation and consequently has often had a considerable influx of people, we do not doubt, that your Province too would be benefited by it.

Stuyvesant had troubles enough of various sorts, and he might well have taken the advice of the Company to borrow no unnecessary vexation on account of the town. The famous dispute with Patroon van Rensselaer, the quarrel with Connecticut, the difficulties with Englishmen and Indians, the complications of a currency of beaver-skins and wampum, the growth of a meddlesome and indolent disposition among the burghers and even among the Burgomasters and Schepens, who went far beyond public meetings and to discuss last year's proclamations—all these things, in the hands of a sweeter temper than Governor Peter's, Thoreau's something pathetic in a complaint which he makes to his neighbor and dear friends, the Nine Men, about the condition of Fort New-Amsterdam. Having in vain besought the Board to put it in repair, he began the business himself with "the few servants and negroes of the colony," and labored at it during two summers; but when he returned from an expedition to the South River he found all his work undone, and the new fortifications "rooted up, trampled down and destroyed by the community's hogs, cows, and horses."

In this state of affairs he resolved to publish once more a proclamation which had been published three or four times already, for the impounding and confiscating of all hogs, and other animals found rooting up and destroying the fort; but before taking such extreme measures, he wished to address himself again to the Board. It was acknowledged that the Governor in this case showed moderation under very trying circumstances. So he did in the case of the Fiscal, Hendrick van Dyck, who not only neglected his duty with respect to the hogs, but "had the audacity to insult, calumniate, and scold" the Governor and the Honorable Council generally. In particular, at the house of Captain François Vyn, and in the presence of Vyn, his wife, the nurse, and Andries Christman, he called the Governor "Scoundrel, Murderer, Tyrant, Rascal, Baby," and other like names."

Although, writes Stuyvesant, in reporting this catalogue of epithets to the Council, "although we have a different opinion of ourselves, and because so far as such merits and calamities have been uttered repeatedly behind our back and in our presence, we cannot bear it any longer without causing our good name and reputation to be suspected." The Fiscal was suspended—a light punishment for an officer with so little discrimination as to call Peter Stuyvesant a baby.

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In a serious conflict of jurisdiction with the Burgomasters and Schepens, over a transaction of great moment, he showed decision and energy. An interdict had been issued, on the authority of the Governor and Council, "forbidding some farm servants to pluck the geese at the Bachana on the eve of Ash-Wednesday," for this excellent reason, among others, that "it is considered entirely frivolous, needless and disrespectful to the college of the magistrates and the church, and to introduce such a little importance as, for instance, the pews and seats in the church, and as we trust that the church is large enough to place every one according to his rank, it appears to us that such trifles do not deserve so much attention, especially in those troublesome times." Church matters were almost a standing cause of trouble. The village of Flatbush (Brooklyn) petitioned in 1656 that Dominie Polhemus should be allowed to officiate alternately in Midwout (Flatbush) and Brooklyn, "which he appears willing to do," and Governor Stuyvesant and his Council decided by vote that they "had no objection against Dominie Polhemus officiating alternately at both places," but they added, with a charming touch of caution, "wind and weather permitting." In less than a year, however, the Brooklyn people tired of Dominie Polhemus, and asked to be excused from paying their share of his salary, on the plea that his ministrations were not worth the price.

"During the week of the 10th of Sunday afternoon, gives us only a prayer instead of a sermon, from which we learn and understand little, and when we think that the prayer or sermon, or whatever it be called, is beginning, it is already over, so that he gives little edification to the congregation." Even during the Christmas holidays the only edification they had was a prayer so short that it was over before we had collected our thoughts. They were held to their duty, however, and later we find that certain villagers who refused to pay were fined double the amount of their assessment.

The Dutch West India Company practiced a tolerance in religious matters which was not common in those days, their object being, as they explained in a letter to Stuyvesant, to do all possible inducements to colonists; but this tolerance was not in making the Governor conform to their policy. They refused a request from him that "the new territories should not be further invaded by people of Jewish race"; and they roundly rebuked him for presuming to forbid the Jews trading to Fort Orange and purchasing real estate. On the other hand, they were unwilling that the Jews should have a synagogue, or be employed in any public service; or above all that they should open retail shops; so that possibly the invasion was effectively impeded. The Governor sent Lutherans to prison for refusing to be converted to the Reformed Church; but the Company, though they rejected a petition from these people "for a preacher and house of their religion," discovered Stuyvesant's excessive zeal, and instructed him to let them worship as they pleased in their own houses. It was "the abominable sect called Quakers," however, which chiefly stirred Governor Peter's wrath. In 1657 the villagers of Flatbush held a public meeting and thirty-one of them signed a remonstrance to the Governor against a recent ordinance forbidding them to receive or entertain Quakers. "It was a noble statement of the Christian 'law of love, peace and liberty,'" and the signers boldly declared that they could not in conscience obey the command of the authorities; but it must be confessed that most of the leaders, being arrested and brought before the Council, showed little of the spirit of martyrdom, acknowledging their offence, craving pardon, and promising better behavior for the future. Several of them were fined and imprisoned. One of the culprits, Henry Townsend, remained defiant, and in 1661 a complaint was made that the Quakers were holding convocations at his house. The Governor ordered the Under Schout to inquire into the case and send the following letter, in English, to the villagers:

Loveing Friends,
Upon petition of sum of you beeing desirous that the Quakers should be allowed to have a house of our Ministers, to wit: Mr. Samuel Davies & Whereas we Credibly were informed

that if the quakers and other Sects contra to Order & Law private Convencicles had been left, We have sent our Minister, Mr. John Tilton, to the Quakers, to the effect that if they will give unto them, an Exact account & true Information of the names of all the persons who have been kept, and with persons therein had Excessed, with persons—men, or woman, there had been present & at the said meetings, we will be content to let them have their Meetings, as they shall desire, on all Circumstances belonging to it. So after my Love I shall Rest.

Your loving friend & Governour
Amsterdam the 8th of January A^o 1661.

Henry Townsend was fined 25 pounds Flemish (800). Sam Spicer was fined 12 pounds. John Tilton of Gravesend and John Townsend of Jamaica were banished. George Wilson, the Quaker preacher, whom these persons had harbored, got away; but the officer captured his cloak. Still the meetings went on, and the next year John Bound of Flatbush was arrested, and shipped to Holland, for allowing Quaker services to be held in his house every Sunday. The Company wrote thereupon to the Governor:

Your last letter informed us that you had banished from the Province and sent to Holland by ship a certain Quaker, John Bound, by name; although we remained away from there, yet as they do not, we doubt very much, whether you have not been too rigorous without diminishing the population and stopping immigration, which must be favored at so tender a stage of the country."

The brilliancy of your spirit, but allow every one to have his own belief, as long as he behaves quietly and legally, gives no offence to his neighbors, does not oppose the government. As the government of this city has always practised this maxim of moderation and consequently has often had a considerable influx of people, we do not doubt, that your Province too would be benefited by it.

Stuyvesant had troubles enough of various sorts, and he might well have taken the advice of the Company to borrow no unnecessary vexation on account of the town. The famous dispute with Patroon van Rensselaer, the quarrel with Connecticut, the difficulties with Englishmen and Indians, the complications of a currency of beaver-skins and wampum, the growth of a meddlesome and indolent disposition among the burghers and even among the Burgomasters and Schepens, who went far beyond public meetings and to discuss last year's proclamations—all these things, in the hands of a sweeter temper than Governor Peter's, Thoreau's something pathetic in a complaint which he makes to his neighbor and dear friends, the Nine Men, about the condition of Fort New-Amsterdam. Having in vain besought the Board to put it in repair, he began the business himself with "the few servants and negroes of the colony," and labored at it during two summers; but when he returned from an expedition to the South River he found all his work undone, and the new fortifications "rooted up, trampled down and destroyed by the community's hogs, cows, and horses."

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